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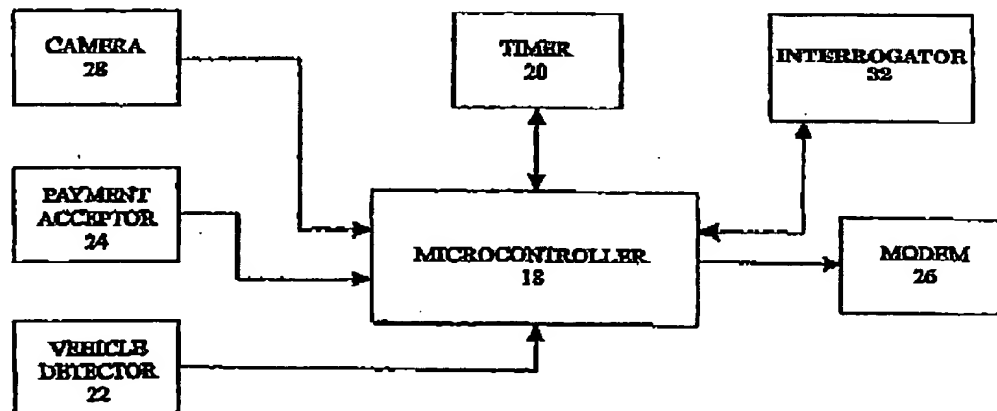
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(54) Title: PARKING METER



(57) Abstract: A parking meter includes a microcontroller and a timer coupled with a microcontroller. A mechanism for accepting payment by coin, credit card or both is coupled with the microcontroller for accepting payment for use of an associated parking space. The microcontroller initiates the timer for a prepaid parking interval upon receiving a signal from the payment acceptance mechanism. A vehicle detector is coupled with the microcontroller for detecting the presence or absence of a vehicle in the associated parking space. The microcontroller initiates an interrogation station to direct an interrogation signal at the associated parking space in the area of the parking space where the license plate of a parked vehicle is located upon determining the existence of a parking violation.

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